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GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORT PROJECT

GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIFIED AREAS
IN SOUTHWESTERN ANHWEI PROVINCE

CIA/RR GP 60-1:L

8 January 1960

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Introduction

This report consists of brief geographical descriptions of two specified areas in southwestern Anhwei Province. These two areas have been designated as A (centered at $31^{\circ}17'N-116^{\circ}11'E$) and B (centered at $31^{\circ}09'N-115^{\circ}50'E$) on the accompanying map and are so referred to in the text. Descriptions apply to areas with an approximate 15-mile radius from the specified center points.

Ta-pieh Shan

Areas A and B possess generally similar physical and cultural characteristics. Both are located in the Ta-pieh Shan, a region of relatively low but quite rugged hills and mountains. Slopes generally are steep, mostly in excess of 20 percent, and there is very little level land. The average elevation of the region is about 3,000 feet, with valleys generally ranging from 700 to 1,400 feet and the mountain peaks and ridges at 3,500 to 5,000 feet. The highest peaks (5,500 to 6,000 feet) are located within a 15-mile radius of the center of Area B -- primarily to the south and east of it. The bedrock of the mountains consists of granite, and rock outcrops are probably common on the steeper slopes and higher ridges and peaks. Upland areas that have been deforested

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for any length of time probably are greatly eroded, with considerable gullying present.

The region is dissected by numerous small streams, most of them north-flowing tributaries of the Pi Ho -- an important tributary of the Hwai Ho. The streams flow in generally deep, V-shaped valleys -- some of them in canyons or gorges. No extensive valley flats or lowlands exist, although narrow bits of valley flats and terraces are adjacent to some of the streams. In some places, cart tracks cannot follow the major streams because of the restricted valleys, and are forced to traverse less precipitous branch valleys and terraces. The steepness of the slopes -- particularly the north-facing slopes of the Ta-pieh Shan -- combined with the fairly heavy rainfall of the area results in frequent and great variations in the stream levels. This factor may affect cross-country movement in the hills, particularly during the period of heaviest rainfall (late spring and summer).

Most of the uplands are covered by mixed forests in varying degrees of density and stages of growth. Lower slopes near the valleys usually are in dry-field crops of corn, cotton, soybeans, and tobacco. Tea is also grown on many of the lower slopes and on other land unsuited to cultivation. Valley flats are used for rice cultivation. Some terracing is practiced, notably in the valley followed by the cart track from Po-tau-ling to Ying-shan near Area B.

It is estimated that about 30 to 50 percent of the general area is covered by forests, a percentage that drops sharply (5 to 10 percent) to the south of Area B on the southern slopes of the Ta-pieh Shan. On lower slopes bamboo groves are common, particularly on the more moist, north-facing slopes. Many of these bamboo groves in the vicinity of the Fo-tzu-ling and Mo-tzu-t'an reservoirs (see map) likely have been exploited in conjunction with the construction projects associated with the dams. On higher slopes, above 1500 feet, a mixed forest of broadleaf evergreens, broad-leaf deciduous, and coniferous species occurs. Oak, elm, chestnut, maple, and pine are common species. Although some stands of fir are found (mainly in Area A-1), the value of this species has caused widespread cutting, particularly in the hills to the south of Area B. Stands of fir generally are localized between 1,700 and 3,000 feet. Grass and rocky outcrops characterize the highest slopes and ridges. Along the very few important roads in the area much of the timber has been exploited. In the deeper and more inaccessible areas located several miles from a main road, however, forests are likely to be relatively untouched.

Transportation facilities in this area are very poor. A network of motorable roads (probably fair weather) radiate from Liu-an, located some 35 miles to the north of Area A. These roads, however, skirt the Ta-pieh Shan area and do not cross it. A motorable road leads from Mo-shan to the Fo-tzu-ling reservoir (and likely to the Mo-tzu-t'an reservoir although details of the latter route are lacking), but from Fo-tzu-ling it appears that only a dirt track cuts southwest to the Hupah border and eventually to Ying-shan. Although this track was not motorable as of 1953, it is possible that portions of it may now be passable.

The area is sparsely populated, entirely by Han Chinese, with the overall population density figure ranging from 30 to 100 persons per square kilometer. Villages are small and few, located in valleys with sufficient level or moderate-slope land to permit rice cultivation. A 1953 traverse along the main track from Fo-tzu-ling to Ying-shan indicated a village density of about one every two miles for the stretch of track in the vicinities of Areas A and B. Since this appears to be the major route of the area, fewer villages probably are found along the lesser paths in the outlying valleys. Although the upland areas are not the abodes of hill tribesmen, the widespread cultivation of tea (particularly Mo-shan), the gathering of bark, timber felling, and reforestation suggest that from time to time people may be encountered in the hills.

Information concerning special security precautions in this area is lacking. It should be assumed, however, that security forces are stationed at the Fo-tzu-ling and Mo-tzu-t'an reservoirs to guard these important installations. In late 1957 a Chinese military unit was stationed at Ying-shan, about 25 miles to the south of Area B.

Area A: The geographical coordinates for the center of Area A appear to fall in or very near a portion of the Fo-tzu-ling reservoir. Operational activities, however, appear feasible in two areas designated as A-1 and A-2, located west and southeast of the center coordinates, respectively.

Area A-1 lies to the west and consists of moderately rough, hilly terrain from 1,700 to 3,500 feet in elevation, largely uninhabited, of about 20 to 30 square miles in extent. Late in 1953 much of Area A-1 was reported to be covered with forests, partly by extensive and fairly thick

stands of fir. If these forests have been preserved, operational activities centered here appear feasible. Detailed information for this and other areas is not sufficient to permit selection of individual drop zones. Small streams that cut back into the hills and the upper portions of their valleys -- although likely presenting hazards to aircraft -- probably are suitable for DZ's.

Area A-2 lies to the southeast and consists of the zone of hilly terrain about three miles wide extending between the arms of the two reservoirs. The ridges have a pronounced north-south trend with the higher ones about 3,500 feet; still higher country lies to the southwest toward Area B-1 (see map). Although no specific information is available concerning the forest cover for A-2, it is probable that discontinuous stands of mixed forest exist. Bamboo along the lower slopes very probably has been used in the construction of the dams. A very significant factor for operations in Area A-2 is that it is effectively isolated on three sides by the filling of the reservoirs. The only remaining access is from the south via very poor mountain peak trails and paths.

Area B: The coordinates for Area B are centered in a zone of relatively low hills and valleys. Backing the area some 8 to 10 miles to the southeast and east, however, are more rugged hills and mountains with some high peaks above 5,500 feet. The higher portions of this area have been designated Area B-1, which is a continuation of the predominantly north-south ridges that extend some 30 to 35 miles from slightly south of the Fu-tze-ling reservoir to north of Ying-shan (see map). A discontinuous cover of mixed forests probably exists on the rougher and more inaccessible hills with the higher peaks and ridges likely barren and rocky. The area is similar to A-2 in that it is partially isolated to the north by the reservoir. However,

it is closer to Ying-shan, where security forces are likely to be stationed, and therefore may be somewhat poorer from the security standpoint than Area A-2. The most likely approach routes to B-1 are paths and trails leading south and southeast from the main track between Po-tzu-ling and Ying-shan. Isolated mountain valleys appear best suited for drop zones. The uplands located southwest, west, and north from the center coordinates of Area B reportedly were largely stripped of timber within the past 20 years and are presently covered by a meager growth of young pine.

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